

Slowing the Spread of COVID-19: Guidance for Livestock Markets

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As our nation works diligently to slow the spread of COVID-19, livestock markets are vital to ensure a safe and steady food supply. **Markets, sellers, and buyers must do their part to protect the health of customers and employees.**

This is *not* business as usual. It is critical that all participants in livestock sales follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to minimize risk of infection, and commit to the [Tennessee Pledge](#) to help Tennesseans return to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods, and reboot our state's economy.

Following consultation with Tennessee livestock market managers and owners, the Tennessee Livestock Marketing Association, the national Livestock Marketing Association, the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and Governor Bill Lee's Economic Recovery Group, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture makes the following recommendations for all livestock sales during this health emergency:

- Any person showing signs of illness or who had recent contact with a sick person should stay home. Consider the use of [COVID-19 symptom](#) screening questions and/or signage.
- Implement cleaning and disinfection practices according to [CDC guidelines](#), with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces at least every two hours.
- Do not allow people to congregate. Restrict access to common areas. Employees and customers should maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.
- No matter if people are indoors or out, [CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Provide handwashing or sanitizing stations for customers.
- Only allow one bidder per business or family on site.
- Require buyers to sign in at arrival. Consider electronic or mobile sign-in options, disinfect shared pens, and maintain at least 6 feet of distance between those waiting to sign in.
- Restrict access to entrances. If possible, have a single entrance and separate exit.
- Make sure any seating allows for at least 6 feet of distance between customers.
- Allow remote bidding online and/or over the phone.
- Prohibit spectators. Consider providing a livestream of the sale online for consignors and spectators to watch.
- Ask consignors to drop off livestock and leave the facility.
- Offer curbside service for check delivery.

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- Use plastic barriers between customers and employees at service counters and clean the barriers at least every two hours.
- Limit employees on site to essential people only.
- Adjust work schedules to limit the number of employees on site at one time. When possible, stagger arrival and departure times, breaks, and meals to promote social distancing.
- Upon reporting to work, ask employees:
 - Have you been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- Employees should not be allowed to work if they answer “yes” to any of the above questions or their temperature exceeds 100.4 Fahrenheit. It is best practice to take employees’ temperature with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival.
- Direct any employees who show signs of illness to leave the premises immediately and to contact their doctor.
- Upon reporting to work, require employees to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Encourage frequent handwashing throughout the day, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. If soap and water are not readily available, provide a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- **Communicate and enforce new policies with employees and the public.**

Every agribusiness should institute a response plan to maintain business operations, follow CDC recommendations to protect their employees and customers, and comply with local, state, and federal directives. The CDC has more information for businesses and employees [online](#).

These recommendations do not replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your operations pursuant to law or regulation. These guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safe operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and are subject to change.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is committed to providing the services you count on while also following CDC guidelines to safeguard the health of our staff and citizens. Access the latest information on Tennessee’s response to COVID-19 [online](#) and follow @TNAgriculture on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates.

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